

USDA APHIS, PPQ

## **Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey (CAPS)**

The Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey (CAPS) is a combined effort by Federal and State agricultural organizations to conduct surveillance, detection, and monitoring of agricultural crop pests and biological control agents.

**Survey targets** include weeds, plant diseases, insects, nematodes, and other invertebrate organisms.

### **Components of the program include**

1. Survey, detection, and identification activities in the field and the laboratory;
2. State level databases;
3. A national database - the National Agricultural Pest Information System (NAPIS); and
4. Electronic information exchange systems.

USDA APHIS PPQ provides national and regional coordination, funding, and technical support for Federal and cooperative survey projects. State Survey Committees, comprised of members from various state agencies and scientific disciplines, work with State Survey Coordinators to direct individual State programs. Currently all State Survey Coordinators are employees of their respective State Land Grant University or State Department of Agriculture.

CAPS has evolved from an initiative begun by the Intersociety Plant Protection Consortium in 1980. First known as the Cooperative National Plant Pest Survey and Detection Program, CAPS was envisioned as a coordinating mechanism for all pest surveys in the U.S. Various committees prepared multiyear plans with many goals and objectives to meet the needs and wants of the research, Extension, regulatory, federal land management, and commercial sectors. USDA APHIS PPQ could not provide adequate resources to meet all the objectives, and few assets were leveraged from other sources.

### **PPQ has three legally mandated responsibilities:**

1. **Protect** American agriculture from foreign plant pest introduction and establishment,
2. **Facilitate export** of American agricultural products, and
3. **Control or eradicate pests** as authorized by legislation and regulation.

In 1992 CAPS was redirected to address a reduced set of goals and objectives more realistically suited to the available resources and within the mission of PPQ.

### **The current program goals include:**

- **Detect exotic pests** before they can become well established
- **Facilitate** the export of U.S. Agricultural products
- **Collect and manage** survey data from PPQ cooperative programs

The CAPS Program assists PPQ in meeting these responsibilities by providing means for detection, documentation, and rapid dissemination of information on plant pests and biocontrol

agents in the U.S. PPQ funds are allocated through cooperative agreements to conduct projects which meet these aims.

CAPS participants from State agencies may be interested in monitoring plant pests to determine first-of-season occurrences, population levels, and other pest-related phenomena. **PPQ supports these activities with communications, data management, and networking resources.** Often, field work can be conducted to meet multiple needs simultaneously.

The CAPS program serves the public and private sectors by improving the quality and availability of pest information. The existing CAPS networks are committed to expanding utilization of pest data in support of an environmentally sound, competitive, and profitable American agricultural system.

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